

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Plankinton School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-07

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Dates of On Site Visit: January 30, 2007

Date of Report: January 31, 2007

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Needs Assistance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State Tables
- Screening information
- Comprehensive plan
- District Data Review information

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district meets all requirements under the provision general supervision. The Plankinton School District has established and effectively implements ongoing child

find to locate, identify and evaluate children with disabilities, as indicated in the district's comprehensive plan. The district has averaged 38 preschool screenings per year over the past four years. The district works with Mid Central Education Cooperative, Aurora County Health Nurse and Head Start to ensure children ages birth to 21 are identified without unnecessary delay. The district has an effective pre-referral and referral system in place. However, the committee believes the process can be improved upon with the addition of a flow chart.

The steering committee concluded the district's staff working within the special education department is highly qualified as determined by the state of South Dakota. On-going professional development is encouraged. Paraprofessionals have the same opportunities for staff development as certified staff. Paraprofessionals are required to attend all in-services provided by the district. The committee has determined however, that a more "formal" process needs to be set in place to determine the district's needs for professional development.

The Plankinton School District uses database decision-making procedures to review and analyze school district-level data to determine ongoing progress. The district's graduation rate for students with a disability is the same as for non disabled students, 100%.

The comprehensive plan procedures meet the requirements for addressing when students with disabilities are placed in alternative educational settings, suspended or expelled.

Prior to January 2007 the district did not have a private school within its boundaries.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through file review and staff interview the monitoring team validates all findings identified by the steering committee as meeting requirements under the provision general supervision. The district has effective child find procedures in place and all students on the child count were identified as students with a disability according to South Dakota eligibility criteria. Staff working with students with disabilities is highly qualified as determined by the State of South Dakota.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- State Data Tables
- Child Count Information
- District records

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Plankinton School District provides a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. The district has not suspended a student with a

disability for more than 10 cumulative school days or expelled a student with a disability from school. If the need arises, the district will follow policies and procedures described within the comprehensive plan and will work to ensure that the student receives FAPE.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through file review the monitoring team validates all findings identified by the steering committee as meeting requirements under the provision free appropriate public education. The district has not had any suspensions or expulsions but has policies and procedures in place to address the issue should the need arise.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables
- File review
- Special education data compiled
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Professional development
- District data

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded the Plankinton School District needs improvement in the area of appropriate evaluation, especially written notice and consent prior to assessment. Parental consent for initial or re-evaluation is not consistently obtained. All tests listed on the prior notice/consent for evaluation were not consistently administered. Functional evaluation was also not consistently conducted or summarized into a report form. Transition evaluation was not consistently conducted prior to the student turning age 16.

The steering committee concluded the Plankinton School District does not consistently ensure the proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process. The multidisciplinary team (MDT) report used by the district prior to the school year 2006-2007 was not in compliance as it did not contain all the necessary information according to state regulations.

Three year re-evaluation timelines were not consistently met

The Plankinton School District needs improvement in the area of evaluation. A flow chart or other tracking device needs to be implemented to assure that all evaluation regulations are met.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through file review the monitoring team determined the district has made improvements under the provision appropriate evaluation. The district is consistently evaluating in the area of transition prior to students with a disability turning 16 years old. The district provided a comprehensive evaluation supporting the eligibility for those students listed on the 2005 child count. The districts current multidisciplinary team report meets federal and states guidelines.

Out of compliance: Needs Assistance

CFR 300.304 Evaluation Procedures a) Notice. The public agency must provide notice to the parents of a child with a disability, in accordance with 300.50, that describes any evaluation procedures the agency proposes to conduct.

Through file review the monitoring team validates the remaining findings of the steering committee as concerns under the provision appropriate evaluation. In four files the district did not conduct evaluations in all areas listed on the prior notice/permission to evaluate. The lack of functional evaluation will be addressed under individualized education program.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights documents
- IEP forms used by the district
- Review of IEP files

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district meets requirements under the provision procedural safeguards. Parental rights are provided according to requirements and graduation needs are determined prior to graduation. Parental consent is obtained prior to the initial provision of special education services. The district has not had a complaint filed or a request for a due process hearing, but has steps in place in case one occurs. The district's comprehensive plan addresses the appointment of surrogate parents. These procedures meet regulatory requirements.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through file review the monitoring team validates the steering committee findings identified as meeting requirement under the provision procedural safeguards. Parental rights were consistently provided to parents. Graduation requirements were addressed one year prior to graduation. Parental consent for placement was obtained for all students with disabilities prior to placement. The district policies and procedures are in place to address any complaint procedures.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Professional development opportunities
- State tables

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district meets requirements under the provision individualized education program. Parents were consistently invited to the individualized education program meetings adhering to the 5 day prior notice requirement. Prior notices for meetings contained all required content.

The district ensures appropriate team membership is present at all IEP meetings. A written justification as to the least restrictive environment was documented in all files. The district ensures transition is student centered.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded the district does not consistently meet the following requirements under the provision individualized education program. Annual review dates are not consistently met and eligibility for special education services is not consistently determined within the regulated timelines. All IEP content is not consistently documented. This includes specific strengths and needs and the student's involvement in the general curriculum on the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). Goals and objectives did not consistently link to the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. How progress was going to be reported to parents and modifications were also not consistently documented.

The steering committee determined the district did not ensure that transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities, reflecting student strengths and interests to prepare them for post high school. Evaluation in all areas of transition was not consistently conducted and a course of study was not consistently documented.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through file review the monitoring team validates some of the steering committee findings under the provision individualized education program (IEP). The district consistently provides five day prior notice to parents for individualized education program meetings and the prior notice contain all required content.

Appropriate team membership is present at all IEP meetings.

The monitoring team also recognizes the district's efforts in improving in many of the areas identified by the steering committee as needing improvement under the provision individualized education program. Through file review the monitoring team determined the district is meeting annual review dates and the

timeline requirements of the evaluation process. The district is also documenting the course of study for transition age students. It is also documenting how the district will report progress to the parent.

Out of compliance: Needs Assistance

CFR 300.304 Evaluation Procedures. b) use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child that may assist in determining (ii) the content of the child's IEP.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include: A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including: (a) How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled students); (2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to: (4) An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the regular class and in activities described in this section; and (9) For each student beginning at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate by the placement committee, a statement of the needed transition services, as defined in § 24:05:27:13.02, including, as applicable, interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.

Through file review the monitoring team validates many of the steering committee findings as areas of concern under individualized education program. In three files functional assessment was not used to obtain specific relevant functional, developmental and academic information to assist in developing the IEP. As a result annual goals were not measurable, skill based and did not link to the PLAAFP. The PLAAFP did not consistently contain the student's strengths and needs in the skill area affected by the disability.

In four files the district did not adequately address how the student's disability affects his/her progress in the general curriculum. For example, a statement such as "because student has difficulty attending to tasks and weaknesses in the areas of math and written expression, student needs the support of special services to be successful with the regular classroom" does not address how the disability affects the students progress in the general curriculum.

In five files the district did not adequately explain/justify why the student's needs could not be met in the regular classroom. The statement "Because of the student's disability, the student needs the support of the special education department in to order to be successful in the regular classroom..." does not explain what educational strategies/interventions the student needs that require him/her to be removed from the regular classroom.

CFR 300.320 Definition of individualized Education Program (4) a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child

Although the district consistently documented the amount of services and location of services in six files it did not specifically document the description of the special education and related services the district will provide for the student. For example, Study Hall or Resource Room does not provide the parent a description of services the district is committed to provide to the child.

CFR 300.320 Definition of individualized Education Program(b)Transition services. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP...1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessment related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate independent living skills.

Although there was transition evaluations conducted in five files, there was no report summarizing the evaluation results which affected the entire transition process within the IEP. The present level of

academic achievement and functional performance page did not address the strengths and needs of all areas of transition which resulted in a lack of a coordinated set of activities to promote post secondary success of the student.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State data tables
- File reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
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Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district meets requirements under the provision least restrictive environment. All children with disabilities are receiving services in the LRE and have supports in place. This is an on-going area of development. The district strives to help all children be successful.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team validates the steering committee findings under the provision least restrictive environment. District supports are in place to provide services in the least restrictive environment.